DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 109 SP 031 429

AUTHOR Rudduck, Jean
TITLE Critical Thinking and Practitioner Research: Have They a Place in Initial Teacher Training?
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, March 27-31, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Action Research; *Critical Thinking; *Divergent Thinking; Foreign Countries; *Government School Relationship; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *England

ABSTRACT

This paper argues the crucial need, in the present higher education climate in England, for higher education tutors to find ways of continuing to work with new and experienced teachers, despite central moves that limit opportunities for sustained and intellectually challenging learning. Opportunities for working on a more critical agenda with teachers have opened up as the ideas of practitioner research and inquiry and reflection-on-practice have become more widely known and accepted. The paper questions, however, whether it is realistic, given the constraints of the present climate and given general understanding of teachers' conventional sources of professional satisfaction, to aspire, on initial teacher education programs, beyond a capacity for reflection-on-action to the kind of research that is "collective, oppositional, and emancipatory." A discussion is presented of the current status of higher education vis-a-vis conservative government control. A description is given of a 36-week program of initial teacher training in which the principle of reflect-on-action is used to encourage critical thinking and inquiry into issues and problems in education. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED310109

CRITICAL THINKING AND PRACTITIONER RESEARCH: HAVE THEY A PLACE IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING?

Paper prepared for presentation at the
American Educational Research Association
Annual Conference at San Francisco, 1989

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Rudduck

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Jean Rudduck
Division of Education
University of Sheffield
Sheffield S10 2BA
England

SP031 429

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CRITICAL THINKING AND PRACTITIONER RESEARCH: HAVE THEY A PLACE IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING?

Summary

Giroux and McLaren (1987, p.286) remind us that "one of the great failures of North American education has been its inability seriously to threaten or eventually replace the prevailing paradigm of teacher as a formal classroom manager with the more emancipatory model of the teacher as critical theorist". At the same time, they continue, "teacher education has consistently failed to provide students with the means ... for fashioning a more critical discourse and set of understandings around the goal and purposes of schooling". In this paper I argue the crucial need, in the present climate, for higher education to find ways of continuing to work with new and experienced teachers - despite central moves that limit opportunities for sustained and intellectually challenging learning. Paradoxically, opportunities for working on a more critical agenda with teachers have begun to open up as the ideas of practitioner research and enquiry and reflection on practice have become more widely known and accepted. The paper questions, however, whether it is realistic, given the constraints of the present climate, and given our understanding of teachers' conventional sources of professional satisfaction, to aspire beyond a capacity for reflection-on-action to the kind of research that is "collective, oppositional and emancipatory" (Lawn 1989).

The context: education and teacher education brought under control

In 1985, and with good reason, Sockett described teacher education in the UK as having had a "turbulent recent history". The turbulence has continued. Our experience is not dissimilar to that of other countries and Smyth, writing in 1987 about both the Australian and the international scene, argues that teacher education is facing a disabling loss of confidence.

Concern about teacher education is directly related to concern about teaching. The schools, it has been said, have failed to produce the human resources necessary to sustain the country's economic position, and teacher educators have failed to offer appropriate training to school teachers:

> (school leavers) "never have the right skills nor the right attitudes. Teachers (are) damned if they do change and damned if they do not ... Teacher educators are also implicated ... Whatever emphasis they give to teacher education courses, it is probably wrong.
> (Ball, 1988, p.290)

Any institution that loses public trust becomes vulnerable to outside intervention. The vulnerability of teacher education courses is increased because the public hammering of teaching, combined with relatively poor pay and conditions of service for teachers, has led to a severe problem of recruitment, particularly in those subjects that are deemed to be most directly related to scientific and technological advance. Anxiety about the shortages of teachers in these subjects - physics, chemistry, mathematics and technology - has opened the way for a populist attack on curriculum content. The "new and artificial subjects" (Hillgate, 1986, p.5) like world studies and personal and social education "distract the child's attention from serious forms of learning" and should be banished from the curriculum. Such subjects have a dangerous edge for they have been nurtured by "an inadequate and politically biased sociology" which is said to have infiltrated the school curriculum via programmes of initial teacher education (ibid). Moreover, members of right wing groups responsible for this series of education pamphlets, have said that it is "unhealthy" to help students respond to issues of race and equality (O'Hear, 1988, p.22) for such concerns can "destroy altogether the basis of our national culture" (Hillgate, 1987, p.3). A similar argument was used in the first Black Paper, published in 1969 (p.7), where Maude stated that the quality of education was threatened by "the ideology of egalitarianism" which reduces achievement to "uniform mediocrity".

As Hargreaves and Reynolds (1989, in press) have suggested, the state has constructed and then exploited a view of schooling as a crisis of under achievement. In the face of such a crisis, the state has assumed a mandate for reform. The reform is sweeping but patently conservative in its values. It will operate through a new framework for a national curriculum, new attainment targets and programmes of testing, appraisal schemes for teachers, patterns of local financial management. Moreover, legislative machinery has been set up to allow schools to opt out of the state system and become semi-independent. Privatisation, with competition as the vehicle for improving standards, seems to be the goal.

In teacher education the moves towards greater centralised control have been pursued with no less determination and the hurdle of university autonomy has been skilfully negotiated (see Goodlad, 1988).

The construction of a crisis of confidence in teacher education, parallel to that in the school system, has been an important justification for new policy. In the 1980s there were two significant and simultaneous policy moves: the establishing of a Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) which provided criteria for the judgment of teacher education courses; and a system of "visits" by teams of Her Majesty's Inspectors to teacher education departments; these "visits" issued issued in written reports which were submitted as 'evidence' to the Secretary of State who would then, taking into account the judgments made as a result of the CATE enquiries, pronounce on

whether particular teacher education programmes would or would not receive accreditation. Institutions failing to "invite" HMI to visit, or institutions failing to meet the criteria set down by CATE, were in danger of losing their "licence" to train teachers. The pressure was strong. Education Departments which have poor reports - and reports are now increasing placed in the public domain and summarised in the national press - might find that recruitment, which was already difficult, might be further damaged. Teacher educators were wary, and were inclined to protect their own futures by conforming to the CATE criteria - even though these criteria had been sharply criticised by many academics (see Sockett, 1985; Rudduck, 1987, 1989).

The result of these new structures for monitoring standards is that initial teacher training courses, which had hitherto roamed free, were now rounded up and branded. The new moves were not of course without benefit, for many courses needed the challenge of greater accountability: habits needed to be questioned; coherence of values neeed to be reviewed; the appropriateness of tutors' experience and command of a variety of pedagogies needed to be updated. It remains, however, that the criteria offered by the state for judging teacher education programmees were ill-thought through and educationally insignificant.

The criteria are now likely to be changed, but not in response to well-argued criticism. They will be changed because the government wants to be sure that its policies for the national curriculum and for the national programme of testing will be reflected in teacher education programmes. At the same time, a massively expensive campaign is being launched to inject industrial awareness into all programmes of teacher training, and the government has used the now familiar system of categorical funding to ensure that teacher education courses will reflect the achievements of the national technical and vocational educational initiative. In short, the government has successfully engineered major changes in the school curriculum and it has, not surprisingly, found ways of ensuring that teacher training is in tune with the new educational programmes that will be offered in schools.

At the same time a strong campaign is being launched, using the crisis in recruitment to teacher education courses, to relocate initial teacher training in the schools (see Rudduck, 1989c). The new right has taken advantage of the teacher shortages to reaffirm their known distaste for "the rigmarole of training" (Cox, 1989), including formal qualifications. They endorse the view that "the only way to learn to teach is doing it" and that the only important prerequisite for teaching is "sound knowledge of content". The new Licensed Teacher Scheme will allow schools to employ anyone who has the basic qualification of an '0' level or GCSE pass in maths and English to teach, and if good progress has been made, to apply for qualified teacher status after a period of two years.

So much for the new frameworks of reform and control. Undoubtedly they have their strengths and also undoubtedly they represent a

well-articulated set of values. Sufficient progress has now been made across the various fronts of teaching and teacher education for us to see the coherence of those values and to predict the likely effects of implementing the policies which they imform. Hargreaves and Reynolds (1989, in press) have already ventured some predictions:

1. that education will henceforth exercise a "reproductive" rather than a "transformative" function, re-enforcing traditional social, ethnic and gender divisions rather than seeking to change them;

2. that education will henceforth reassert academic goals rather than social or personal goals, using vocational programmes as a means of providing compensatory experience and motivation for those whom the system has in effect already failed;

3. that education will diminish and delegitimise opportunities for critique, both within courses of initial and inservice teacher education and in schools.

Let us unpack the third projection. It has a number of components: higher education's commitment to the nurturing of critical thinking; the new structures for teacher education and higher education's loss of territory within both initial and inservice teacher education programmes; teaching as a profession and the significance of qualifications to professional status.

Critical thinking brought under control

For many years the government endorsed the notion of teachers' autonomy as a basis of professionalism. It was safe to do so, for the government saw the great majority of teachers as conservatively respectable and anxious to be regarded as "true professionals" whose concerns would be pedagogic, moral and inter-personal but not political (Grace, 1987, p.208). Several things have happened to challenge the stability of that perception. First, aware that they were not achieving the conditions of service and pay that they believed they merited, some groups of organised teachers broke the professional protocol and started to use their autonomy radically rather than conservatively. Second, the structural reforms of the 60s, expressed in the move towards comprehensivisation, and the curriculum reforms of the 70s and 80s, have made teachers more aware of issues of equality of opportunity with consequent threat to the principles of differentiation and competition around which schooling has been organised. Third, many teacher educators have tried to take on board ideals of teacher 'empowerment', using 'reflection', 'action research' and 'teacher research' (often rather losely construed) as a framework for critical thinking.

Such trends threaten to turn teachers into 'radicals' and radicals are a threat to the authority of central government. "The problems", said a conservative politician (referring in fact to only the first of my three trends), "can be solved only by

making schools again accountable to some authority outside them. The necessary sanction is either a nationally enforced curriculum or parental choice, or both." (Boyson, 1975, pp.141-2; in Grace, 1987, p.217). Thus, the profession is being brought to heel in terms of its autonomy, and tighter accountability procedures are now in place.

At the same time, the profession's status is being challenged by the erosion of its base in qualifications. Progress towards establishing teaching as an all-graduate profession has been celebrated with a robust pride. Members of the new right have questioned the need for a training qualification (indeed, for a first degree) and there is some danger of our returning to the situation of the 1920s when the only qualification for entry to teaching was to be over 18 and vaccinated! There is undoubtedly a recruitment crisis, but to solve it by lowering entry qualifications brings a generalised loss of identity and position:

> Certification requirements provide important psychic benefits ... they make teaching seem more like a profession by guaranteeing that not just anyone can become a teacher; in this sense, certification, along with the professional education courses they require, serve an important symbolic function.
> (Silberman, 1970, p.439)

The claim of the new right that teachers don't need training - that teaching is caught not taught - seems to be fuelled by a sharp anti-intellectualism which leads them to denounce as worthless the efforts of higher education to encourage a habit of critical reflection on practice. Teachers learn by doing, they say. Teacher educators disagree:

> Practice alone is, of course, not enough; without some coordinating theory, some inter-connected ideas, purely practical subjects can ossify and degenerate congeries of rules-of-thumb and obsession with technique. Practice without theory can become basely conservative; theory without practice can become arcane, unintelligible or simply trivial.
> (Goodlad, 1988, p.54)

Another link in this chain of attack on the professional and intellectual status of teachers and on the role of higher education in the training of teachers is the curtailment of opportunities for extended professional study. The number of teachers on one-year secondments working for a higher degree has dropped dramatically in the last two years. (In the UK, unlike some other countries, teachers have not traditionally paid their own way in seeking opportunities for full time study.) The public justification for this move is that when public funds are limited it is better to give many teachers short bursts of inservice refreshment than to give a small number a whole year of study. There is some reason in this, but what is lost is the opportunity for teachers to commit themselves to sustained and coherent

practice-related studies that have a critical and reflective edge. As Hargreaves and Reynolds say (1989, in press):

> There is greater pressure towards productivity but less opportunity to reflect on the worth and rationality of what is being produced ... The structure of ... inservice experiences denies teachers the opportunity to engage in sustained critical questioning.

And Carr (1986, p.6) warns:

> Any approach to teacher education which does not encourage teachers to reflect critically on their own educational views and on the nature of education as it is realised in the institutional setting of schools will be either inherently conservative or dangerously doctrinaire".

I believe that we have made progress with translating this principle into practice, but at a time when we are opening up the possibility of helping teachers to see themselves as critical thinkers, central policies are restoring a view of teaching as a delivery job - a technical operation (ibid, p.267).

There are of course dangers in higher education's endorsing critical thinking as the nurturing of intellect, for higher education can itself become an agent of intellectual control. Indeed, the university can represent the worst of abstract and elitist disdain for practice. But there seems to be, in higher education departments, a new wave of commitment to helping teachers develop an autonomous capacity for critical awareness, whether through reflection on action or through some form of engagement in classroom research. The notions of 'reflection' and 'research' are increasingly being used to build a coherent framework for initial training.

Teacher research has gone some way towards encouraging a critical stance but its distinctive feature - the individual struggling to understand the interactions and events of his or her own classroom - may not now be enough. Teacher research has, so far, generally concerned itself with small-scale problems in particular classrooms and the focus may need to be extended from the individual to the group, from classroom work to school work. By extending the arena for enquiry in this way, we may make it possible for teachers to undertake research that is genuinely practical, reflective, collective, political and change-based (see Lawn, forthcoming).

Practitioner research and initial teacher education

There are several questions that have to be considered in relation to practitioner research and initial teacher education. The first is whether teacher educators and student teachers should give attention to practitioner research given the crowded agenda of teacher education programmes. The second (asuming a convincing response to the first question) is what kind of practitioner research might appropriately be introduced and explored. The third is what strategies teacher educators can best use to introduce student teachers to practitioner research given the time and status constraints of initial teacher education programmes.

There are a number of possible - and positive - responses to the first question. One is to argue that teaching as a career is peculiarly subject to the deadening effects of routinisation, for teachers tend to encounter, as Schon (1983) says, the same kinds of situation over and over again. After a while, teachers see what they expect to see and constantly reconstruct the classroom in its own image. Research is a way of helping teachers to sharpen their perceptions of the everyday realities of their work; it helps them to identify worthwhile problems to work on and through their enquiry to extend their own understanding, insight and command of the situations in which they work. It helps teachers to recognise contradictions of purpose and value and to monitor the effects of strategies designed to achieve the purposes that they have in mind.

Commitment to such activity is not part of the public agenda of most school staff rooms and the socialising force of schools (see Lacey, 1977) is such that if students are not introduced to the excitement and power of practitioner research during their period of initial training they may not, given the demise of opportunities for sustained inservice study, turn voluntarily and readily to such a way of learning later in their career.

Connelly (1988) summarises Schon's two recent books (1983 and 1987) by saying that "the idea is that practitioners are essentially self-educated via the pursuit of their ongoing practices and reflection upon them": teaching is perceived as a "sequence of problem-finding and problem-solving episodes in which teachers' capabilities continually grow as they meet, define and solve practical problems" (ibid). This sounds very much as though the extension of capabilities occurs as a natural process, with the recognition and definition of worthwhile problems a constant element in that natural process. Our own experience of working with experienced teachers suggests that capabilities are not automatically subject to growth in this way and that the likelihood of teachers opting to learn from the thoughtful and critical study of their own frameworks for practice is greater if such activity has been legitimised through productive experiences during initial training.

Our own recent research (Squirrell et al,1988) suggests that programmes of teacher education that concentrate exclusively on short-term survival and that do not offer students frameworks for thinking about their own practice and for relating their own institution's practices to broader policies and enquiries are likely to be criticised as short-changing the students. Not all students, of course, see things this way and many are still content with building up relatively random collections of techniques that have little coherence or personal character (see Hatton's account of the 'bricolage' teacher, 1988).

So far, I have outlined the case made for a reflective style of practitioner research but a reflective approach to teaching is not enough, some would argue: "...the defect of the reflective approach is that it is severely constrained and limited by what it ignores" (Smyth,1987, p.159). What it ignores are the wider social and political frameworks, beyond the classroom and the school, that shape the parameters of education in ways that teachers, with their eyes drawn to the minutiae of their own practice, too often fail to see. What is needed is a more full-blooded commitment to action-oriented research. Advocates of this position argue that the responsibilities of teachers have been too narrowly defined and that only by helping teachers to see themselves as "bearers of critical knowledge, rules and values" through which they can problematize the fundamental relationships of teaching and learning can we hope to change the disabling image of teachers "as primarily technicians or public servants whose role it is to implement rather than to conceptualize pedagogic practice" (Giroux and McLaren, 1986, pp.225-6; in Smyth, 1987, p.157).

What the critical thinking - action research line encourages is the possibility of transformation rather than the unwitting reproduction of existing structures and values. It enables teachers to exercise the right to question the authority of past practice. Maxine Greene suggests why this rarely happens: it could be, she says, because "the processes that go on in (teachers') institutions strike them as so automatic, there seems to be no alternative but to comply. Their schools seem to resemble natural processes: what happens in them appears to have the sanction of natural law and can no more be questioned or resisted than the law of gravity" (1985; in Smyth, 1987, p.156).

Aspirations to extend the teacher's sphere of concern are ambitious and may prove to be unrealistic. Their advocates are virtually saying that teachers themselves, much as Willis's lads, are party to the construction of their own limited futures; they are "learning to labour", committing themselves to a career as deliverers of other people's policies, purveyors of other people's values, puppets moving to strings that are always manipulated by others.

I must admit to being excited by the rhetoric - but troubled by the distance between these aspirations and the ground that most

teachers, student teachers and teacher educators have their feet on.

There seem, then, to be at least two different responses to my second question, what kind of practitioner research might appropriately be introduced and explored in programmes of initial teacher education. On the one hand there is the politically ambitious agenda of the advocates of critical pedagogy - 'vintage' action research, and on the other there is the more modest attempt to encourage teachers to use research or enquiry as a means of clarifying and developing the values embedded in classroom and school work. Adelman and Carr (1988) spell out the weakness of the softer approach: "By developing primarily as a form of teacher-controlled classroom research, (it) has managed to create for itself the image of a popular 'grass-roots' movement which neither threatens, nor is itelf threatened....". Such practitioner research runs the risk of addressing trivial questions, lacks cumulative power, and offers no collective, radical challenge. But teacher research is also a way of building personal excitement, confidence and insight - and these are important foundations for development. That is the dilemma.

Do teachers want to involve themselves in 'critical' action research

The dilemma is sustained by the findings of Huberman's recent research (1989). Huberman offers an account of career 'stages' derived from a detailed analysis of interviews conducted with 160 Swiss teachers selected to form "experience groups" (5-10 years of experience, 11-19 years, 20-29 years and 30-39 years). Teachers in the later stages of their career were presented as passing through a period of structural reform (such as many teachers are now facing in the UK) and entering a final phase of 'positive focusing', 'defensive focusing' or 'disenchantment'. Teachers in the 'defensive focusing group' are described as "specialising, reducing commitments, using seniority to carve out a comfortable schedule, relating only to a small circle of peers"; they are the traditionalists who opposed the educational reforms and "were brought kicking and screaming through the renewal phase". The 'disenchanted' are those who supported the idea of reform but who became disillusioned because the values had been undermined or confounded and because administrators failed to carry through their support for the reforms and for the teachers engaged in the reforms. The 'positive focusers' are characterised by a constructive attitude but at the same time they are committed to doing only what they choose to do: "I've done my share; now leave me alone to do what I want".

Huberman's data, and his categorisation system, lead him to take the 'positive focusers' as his target group for preventive action and he concentrates on finding, in earlier phases, predictors for those who will not, in later career, be among the 'defensive' or 'disenchanted'. His comments are worth quoting in full:

> Put briefly: teachers who steered clear of reform or other multiple classroom innovation, but who invested consistently in classroom-level experiments - what they called 'tinkering' with new materials, different pupil grouping, small changes in grading systems ... were more likely to be 'satisfied' later on in their career than most others were and far more likely to be satisfied than their peers who had been heavily involved in school-wide or district-wide projects.
>
> So 'tinkering', together with an early concern for instructional efficiency ("getting it down into a routine, getting the materials right for most situations I run into") was one of the strongest predictors of ultimate satisfaction. Inversely, heavy involvement in school-wide innovation was a fairly strong predictor of 'disenchantment' after 20-25 years of teaching. Tending one's private garden, pedagogically speaking, seems to have more pay-off in the long haul than land reform, although the latter is perceived as stimulating and enriching while it is happening.

Huberman mentions two other factors which were "predictive of professional satisfaction later in the career cycle": the first was a capacity to make small "spontaneous role shifts when one began to feel stale" - changes to the grade level of teaching, subject matter, classroom setting, academic stream, or age of pupils being taught. Here, it seems, teachers are exploiting the natural diversity of the situation to "keep the brain cells from dying off". The second factor was to do with teachers' recognising that they were achieving significant results or having significant impact on their pupils.

Huberman's work has some disturbing implications for those interested in radical teacher research. It seems, according to his data, that teachers are most satisfied by small modifications in the settings in which they work which allow them to take a different perspective on their work. The data might be construed as questioning the appropriateness or feasibility of aspiring to develop in teachers a capacity for fundamental, critical research, such as Smyth, Lawn and others are advocating, that reaches out beyond the walls of the classroom.

It is chastening, in the light of Huberman's study, to remind ourselves that the majority of young people entering teaching, and the majority of practising teachers, are conservative voters - and the radical reappraisals that critical action research propose for them may not be obviously congenial.

It is also chastening to recollect that in the present fury of enforced change and the increasing bureaucratisation of school work, teachers are crying out for more time to concentrate on the simple task of teaching and learning that they see as the heart of their professional responsibility.

Introducing student teachers to reflection and enquiry/research

In our own work we have used the principle of reflection-on-action to give coherence to our 36 week programme of initial teacher training (for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education, PGCE). There are three structual features that provide opportunities for all students to experience the benefits (or distractions) of reflective dialogue and collaborative research. First, during the early period of block teaching practice, students are paired with another student teaching the same subject and for part of the time they share the same teaching timetable. This arrangement allows them to observe each other at work, to identify and explore interesting issues and problems, and to learn the value of giving and receiving constructive peer criticism and support. It also challenges the conventional view of 'the teacher as an island' and helps students to be confident about talking through the problems of practice. Second, we have introduced three day 'analysis' workshops where students choose to work intensively on a topic that interests them (such as co-operative group work, working with children with special needs, understanding the pupil's perspective in learning). Here the aim is to help students to see experience, their own and the documented experience of others, as evidence from which they can deepen their own understanding of the complexities of classroom and school life. Third, all students, in the final weeks of the course, form 'collaborative enquiry' groups: each group returns to a school which one of its members worked in during teaching practice and the group researches a problem which has been identified by the school and which the group finds interesting and worthwhile. Problems explored in this way have included: a school's options scheme with special reference to the factors affecting choice of modern languages; what pupils learn from field trips in geography with special reference to the balance of social, procedural and academic goals; pupils' attitudes to a new, intensive programme of anti-racist activities; the adequacy of a school's history resource collection in relation to pupils' current interests and concerns; and patterns and explanations of truancy in a particular school setting. Although the majority of these enquiries are subject-based and classroom-based, some, like truancy and anti-racism, explore broader issues.

In addition to these opportunities for reflection, enquiry and research, which all students experience as part of the basic structure of the programme, tutors will, according to their own confidence and commitment, model reflection-on-action in relation to their own everyday work with their students. For example, they may tape record their supervisory exchanges with students and use these as a basis for understanding the problem of authority in learning relationships. (For a detailed account of the ways in which one tutor sustains reflection-on-action as the core of his teaching-learning programme (see Lucas 1988a, 1988b, and 1988c.)

All tutors involved in the initial training of teachers are themselve engaged in school-based or school-focused research projects and colleagues are beginning to feel more comfortable now in acknowledging where their weaknesses in research are, where they need help from outsiders, and what kinds of support they can offer each other. A nationally-funded research project which was based in the Department (see Squirrell et al, 1988)

focused on students' views of professional knowledge and usefully identified for us several aspects of practice which could be improved on - for example, which do not fit the logic of our new concerns and yet are so much part of the traditional baggage of teacher training programmes that we were not able to 'see' their incongruity. For instance, despite our emphasis on practice as the starting point for learning, the first formal communication that student teachers receive after being accepted on the course, is a reading list; then there is the period of intensive observation in a school, during the first two weeks of the programme, which students embark on without their being shown in advance how to learn from observation - a situation which probably leads them to rely on structures for making sense of observation which derive from their own experience as pupils and which may need to be challenged; and then there are the written assignments: we assume that these are an appropriate way of communicating and recording learning whereas writing extended essays is not something that science and maths students feel comfortable with and the requirement leads them to see the course as 'academic' in nature and as making unjustified demands in areas which they thought, might at the very least, be problematised. (For a fuller account, see Squirrell et al, 1988.)

Our programme will continue to build its coherence around the idea of reflective practitioners because we believe that a capacity for reflection offers teachers a means of sustaining the excitement of teaching and allows them to continue to learn in co-operative but self-critical company. Our approaches are also sufficiently close to the daily demands of teaching and learning for students on a relatively short course of training not to dismiss them as unrelated to practice - and this is an important criterion in a world that is increasingly consumer oriented.

Conclusion and summary

Giroux and McLaren (1987, p.286) remind us that "one of the great failures of North American education has been its inability seriously to threaten or eventually replace the prevailing paradigm of teacher as a formal classroom manager with the more emancipatory model of the teacher as critical theorist". At the same time, they continue, "teacher education has consistently failed to provide students with the means ... for fashioning a more critical discourse and set of understandings around the goal and purposes of schooling". In this paper I have argued the crucial need, in the present climate, for higher education tutors to find ways of continuing to work with new and experienced teachers - despite central moves that limit opportunities for sustained and intellectually challenging learning. Paradoxically, opportunities for working on a more critical agenda with teachers had begun to open up as the ideas of practitioner research and enquiry and reflection on practice have become more widely known and accepted. The paper questions, however, whether it is realistic, given the constraints of the present climate and given our understanding of teachers' conventional sources of professional satisfaction, to aspire, on our initial teacher education programmes, beyond a capacity for reflection-on-action to the kind of research that is "collective, oppositional and emancipatory" (Lawn 1989).

References

Adelman, C. and Carr, W. (1988) Whatever happened to action research? (Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of East Anglia, August.) (Mimeo)

Ball, S. (1988) Staff relations during the teachers' industrial action: context, conflict and proletarianisation, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 9, 3, 289-306.

Boyson, R. (1975) The Crisis in Education, London: Woburn Press.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1983) Becoming Critical: Knowing through Action Research, Deakin University Press (reprinted by Falmer Press, 1987).

Carr, W. (1986) Recent developments in teacher education: a response. Paper presented at the Conference on Teacher Research and INSET, University of Ulster, February 1986. (Mimeo)

Carr, W. (1989) Action research: ten years on, Journal of Curriculum Studies, 21, 1, 85-90.

Carr, W. (ed.) (Forthcoming) Quality in Teaching: Arguments for a Reflective Profession, Lewes: Falmer Press.

Connelly, F.M. (1988) Teacher evaluation: a critical review and a plea for supervised reflective practice. Paper given at a workshop for the World Bank Seminar on Teachers' Costs and Effectiveness.

Cox, C.B. (1989) Unqualified approval, Times Educational supplement, 6.1.89.

Cox, C.B. and Dyson, A.E. (1969) Fight for Education: A Black Paper, London: The Critical Quarterly Society.

Demaine, J. (1988) Teachers' work, curriculum and the new right, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 9, 3, 247-264.

Giroux, H.A. and McLaren, P. (1987) Teacher education as a counter public sphere: notes towards a redefinition, in T.S. Popkewitz (ed.), Critical Studies in Teacher Education, Lewes: Falmer Press, 266-297.

Goodlad, S. (1988) Four forms of heresy in higher education: aspects of academic freedom in education for the professions, in M. Tight (ed.), Academic Freedom and Responsibility, Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 49-65.

Grace, G. (1987) Teachers and the state in Britain: a changing relation, in M. Lawn and G. Grace (eds.), Teachers: the Culture and Politics of Work, Lewes: Falmer Press, 193-228.

Greene, M. (1985) Teacher as project: choice, perspective and the public space. (Mimeo)

Hargreaves, A. and Reynolds, D. (eds.) (Forthcoming) Education Policies: Controversies and Critiques, Lewes: Falmer Press.

Hargreaves, A. and Reynolds, D. (Forthcoming) Decomprehensivisation, in A. Hargreaves and D. Reynolds (eds.), op. cit.

Hatton, E.J. (1988) Teachers' work as bricolage, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 9, 3, 337-357.

Hillgate Group (1986) Whose Schools? A Radical Manifesto, London: The Hillgate Press.

Hillgate Group (1987) The Reform of British Education, London: The Claridge Press.

Huberman, M. (1989) Teacher development and instructional mastery. Paper given at the international conference on Teacher Development: Policies, Practices and Research, O.I.S.E., Toronto, February. (Mimeo)

Lacey, C. (1977) The Socialization of Teachers, London: Methuen.

Lawn, M. (1989) Being caught in schoolwork: the possibilities of research in teachers' work, in W. Carr (ed.), op. cit.

Lucas, P. (1988a) An approach to research-based teacher education through collaborative inquiry, Journal of Education for Teaching, 14, 1, 55-73.

Lucas, P. (1988b) Teaching practice placement: laying the foundations for a reflective training community, British Journal of In-Service Education, 14, 2, 92-99.

Lucas, P. (1988c) Approaching research-based teacher education: questions for a reflective method assignment programme in initial training, Cambridge Journal of Education, 18, 3, 405-420.

Maude, A. (1969) The egalitarian threat, in C.B. Cox and A.E. Dyson (eds.), op. cit.

O'Hear, A. (1988) Who Teaches the Teachers?, Research Report 10, London: Social Affairs Unit.

O'Hear, A. (1989) Teachers can become qualified in practice, Guardian, 24 January.

Rudduck, J. (1985) Teacher research and research-based teacher education, Journal of Education for Teaching, 11, 1, 281-289.

Rudduck, J. and Wellington, J. (1989a) Encouraging the spirit of enquiry in initial teacher training, Forum, 31, 2, Spring, 50-57.

Rudduck, J. (1989b) Doing it is not enough, Guardian, February 7.

Rudduck, J. (1989c) Accrediting teacher education courses: the new criteria, in A. Hargreaves and D. Reynold (eds.), op. cit.

Schon, D. (1983) The Reflective Practitioner, London: Temple Smith.

Schon, D. (1987) Educating the Reflection Practitioner, San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Silberman, C.E. (1970) Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education, New York: Vintage Books.

Sockett, H. (1985) What is a school of education?, Cambridge Journal of Education, 15, 3, 123-127.

Sockett, H. (1989) Research, practice, and professional aspiration within teaching, Journal of Curriculum Studies, 21, 2, 97-112.

Smyth, J. (1987) Educating Teachers, Lewes: Falmer press.

Smyth J. (1987) Transforming teaching through intellectualizing the work of teachers, in J. Smyth, op. cit, 155-168.

Squirrell, G., Gilroy, P., Jones, D., and Rudduck, J. (1988) Books, Libraries, Writing and the PGCE Course, Research Report to the British Library Research and Development Department, London.

Willis, P. (1977) Learning to Labour, Farnborough: Saxon House.